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Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 11 (g)

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE

Letter dated 24 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights

On behalf of the co-signatori herewith transmit a joint letter on the question of conscientious objection to military service.

We would request that this joint letter* be circulated as an official document of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 11 (g).

(Signed): Vanu GOPALA MENON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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* The annex is reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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24 April 2002

HE Mr Krzysztof Jakubowski
Chairperson of the 58th Session of the
Commission on Human Rights
Geneva

Dear Ambassador Jakubowski

QUESTION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE (ITEM 11g)

The delegations listed below would like to refer to the resolution introduced by Croatia regarding conscientious objection to military service under item 11(g) contained in document E/CN.4/2002/L.62.

2 National defence is a fundamental sovereign right under international law. Where individual beliefs or actions run counter to such a right, the right of a state to preserve national security must prevail. Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognise that the exercise of the rights and freedom of the individual is subject to the necessity of ensuring public order and the general welfare of the society.

3 Where a state has established a compulsory military service system under which every citizen is legally required to serve, allowing individuals to be excused from military service would compromise the concept of collective responsibility for national defence, undermine national values and breach the principle of equal application of the law.

4 For the above reasons, we do not recognise the universal applicability of conscientious objection to military service, and therefore disassociate ourselves from the resolution contained in E/CN.4/2002/L.62.

5 We would request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the 58th session of the Commission of Human Rights.

Yours sincerely

(List of co-signatories attached)

List of co-signatories:
Joint Statement on Conscientious Objection to Military Service

1. People's Republic of China
2. People's Republic of Bangladesh
3. Republic of Botswana
4. Arab Republic of Egypt
5. State of Eritrea
6. Islamic Republic of Iran
7. Republic of Iraq
8. Republic of Lebanon
9. Union of Myanmar
10. Republic of Rwanda
11. Republic of Singapore
12. Republic of Sudan
13. Syrian Arab Republic
14. United Republic of Tanzania
15. Kingdom of Thailand
16. Socialist Republic of Vietnam

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